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EIRINI DASKALOPOULOU

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF  
PELOPONNESE

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## **Voting turnout in Greece: expressive or instrumental?**

**Irene Daskalopoulou**

**Department of Economics, University of Peloponnese, Greece.**

Corresponding author address: Irene Daskalopoulou, Department of Economics, University of Peloponnese, Thesi Sechi (Proin 4o Pedio Volis), 22100 Tripoli, Greece. Tel.: ++30 2710 230129, Email: [daskal@uop.gr](mailto:daskal@uop.gr).

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### **Abstract**

Voting turnout is a core element of political democracy as it constitutes the so-called hard evidence of citizens' engagement in the wider political processes. Thus, increasing voting abstention rates in the developed countries and the emergence of abstract types of political and civic engagement raise concerns over the ways in which participation evolves in modern democracies and the underlying socio-political mechanisms and dynamics that govern its development. Within this context, we analyse the micro-level determinants of voting turnout rates in Greece using ESV data for the 2002-2011 period. In particular, we test for the effects of formal and latent political participation, activism and trust as pointing to either an expressive or instrumental voting decision process. After controlling for the individuals' socio-demographic and economic profile evidence is found of instrumental voting in Greece. Important policy level implications arise as a result of these findings.

**Key words:** voting turnout; political participation; activism; trust; economic crisis; Greece

## Introduction

Voting is perhaps the single most important evidence of the legitimacy pertaining to a democratic regime. As an essential element of participation, voting turnout constitutes the *signe qua non* of democratic elections and a means for people to legally take part in collective decision making processes and change their governing officials (Lipset 1959, Dahl 1982, Lijphart 1999, Schmitter and Karl 1991). In that sense, political democracy is about regulating the political power held by elites in contrast to non-elites (Bollen 1980), i.e. it is a synthesis between political freedom and political equality (Munck 2016). The quality of democracy is subject to the existing nexus between the political system of a society and other characteristics, e.g. the modernization process, social justice and a market-based economic system (Lipset 1959). These characteristics are actually societal choices and phenomena with multifaceted causes and consequences (Bollen 1990, Munck and Verkuilen 2002). Furthermore, they account for the difference between democracy and democratic standards, i.e. the difference between formal rule of law and socio-political and economic outcomes (Lipset 1959, Hewitt 1977, Dahl 1984, Gastil 1987, Munck 2016).

Participation in that sense is a critical element of democracy as operationalised in practice, since it practically safeguards political freedom and political equality from turning into mere formalities (Munck 2016). When the majority of citizens have the power to change the status quo, then democracy carries the most desirable properties of stability, legitimacy and effectiveness (Lipset 1959, Dahl 1982, Lijphart 1999, Schmitter and Karl 1991, Munck 2016). These properties contribute to socio-economic welfare as different individual preferences are matched via elections (Lipset 1959, Schmitter and Karl 1991). Given that electoral participation may fluctuate alongside national contexts (e.g. compulsory voting, political system), types of elections, and time, important insights might be provided via country level evidence regarding the individuals' decision to participate in national elections.

From the early 1980's onwards, voting abstention rates in Greece constantly increase at a slow albeit standard rate. This fact indicates the presence of a possibly persistent trend that merits deeper analysis. Political rights and political liberties in

Greece are sufficient to characterise the country as a fair and stable political democracy (Danopoulos 2017). Nevertheless, increasing abstention rates point to a legitimization crisis that most probably relates to the wider civic culture qualities of the Greek society (Daskalopoulou 2018a). Thus, the analysis of the various political, social and economic factors as predictors of voting turnout in different societies bears important insights. To that extent the present study analyses the effect of civic culture features on the probability of voting turnout in Greece. In particular, the present study has a twofold aim. First, we are interested in sketching the profile of voters (compared to non-voters) in order to identify the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of people who are more likely to participate in this crucial democratic legitimisation process. The second aim relates to identifying the possible effect that formal and latent political participation forms, activism and trust might exercise upon an individual's decision to participate in elections in Greece. Taken together these voting determinants will allow us to differentiate between expressive participation (acts motivated by sense of identity and obligation to neighbors, community etc.) and / or instrumental participation (acts motivated by the functional and political concerns of people such as protect personal investments and promote local businesses etc.) (Dahl 1984, Talo and Mannarini 2015) as the underlying motive of voting turnout in Greece.

As regards the study's contribution two points need to be made. First, the suggested analysis is unique for Greece as no previous study has been performed in this area and will thus provide us with important information regarding people's motives with regard to electoral participation. The second contribution relates to the study's relevance for policy analysis and design. During the past decades Greece has made important achievements with regard to its integration in European Union (EU) regulation framework and procedures. Nevertheless, the country's socio-economic and institutional basis has proven unable to handle the impact of the financial crisis while the governmental authorities and political organisations have largely failed to gain widespread support for the necessary structural changes that might ensure Greece's sustainable socio-economic development (Bitros 2013, Bitros and Karayiannis 2013). A period of profound asymmetry between individual motives and policy objectives seems to be at hand. A clearer understanding of the motives underlying political participation procedures and the content of consent attributed to voting is crucial as for the country to be able to build stronger institutions that will help her

address future challenges (Baltas 2013, Bitros 2015). Here we assume that knowledge on the potentially expressive or instrumental voting character of features such as formal and informal participation, activism and trust might enhance our understanding of how to build social consensus via actively supporting the key societal decision making mechanisms of voting participation. The empirical analysis is based on ESV data referring to the 2002-2011 period for Greece. Analysis differentiates between the pre and the post crisis periods and yields important evidence with regard to the profile of voters and the instrumental nature of their voting participation.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Part 2 is devoted to a brief presentation of the study's theoretical context. Part 3 presents the model and data. Part 4 presents the results and Part 5 concludes the paper with a discussion of the study's findings.

### **Theoretical Context: The Democracy – Participation Relationship**

Political democracy is a synthesis between political freedom and political equality rules that are set forth in order to facilitate collective decision making in the presence of different preferences (Lipset 1959, Munck 2016). It is a political system '*... which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials*' (Lipset 1959, p. 71), and regulates the difference in political power held by elites and non-elites (Bollen, 1980). Furthermore, constitutional democracy carries stability, legitimacy and effectiveness because it is the vehicle for achieving the wider socio-economic goals of a society (Lipset 1959, Dahl 1982, Lijphart 1999, Schmitter and Karl 1991). To that extent, political democracy is inexorably linked to social and economic goals but it is not identical to social democracy and/or economic democracy (Lipset 1959, Hewitt 1977, Dahl 1982, Gastil 1987). Socio-economic concerns often enter the discussion regarding the quality of a democracy, an issue which relates directly to the nexus between the political system and other societal choices such as, the modernization process of societies, social justice and a market-based economic system (Bollen 1990, Munck and Verkuilen 2002).

According to Schmitter and Karl (1991, p. 83) we might identify political democracy through the presence of key democratic institutions such as a) *consensus*, i.e. people's degree of agreement with substantive political actions and the role of the

state, b) *participation*, i.e. rules supporting active and equal participation in politics should one wishes to, c) *access*, i.e. equal opportunities of groups to express their preferences, d) *responsiveness*, i.e. rulers must be held accountable for their actions through regular and fair processes, and e) *parliamentary sovereignty*, i.e. the legislature must not be the only body that makes rules or even be the only body with the final authority to decide which laws are binding. These democratic insitutionsappear through an immense variety of empirical manifestations(Munck 2016). The crucial role of the social environment of politics is clearly evidenced in the cross national differences indemocracy. We might categorise the origins of these differences into four wide areas. The first one relates to cross natinal differences in the political system and the legitimacy of a country's institutions (e.g. confidence in a country's government and parliament) (Klingemann 1999, Karp, Banducci& Bowler 2003, Aarts & Thomassen 2008, Ariely 2015). The second one relates to the type and stock of social capital and in particular trust and solidarity as key societal features (Fukuyama 2001, 2014, Putnam 1995, Newton 1997, Marozzi2015). The third area of differences among countries relates to the role of mass mediaand their interaction with the society(Newton 1997, Fukuyama 2014, Ceron and Memoli 2016). Finally, the fourth area relates to differences in what is known as abstract types of civic participationand engagement or else disengagement which is thought to be a genuine and active style of participation in modern economies (Ekman & Amnå 2012, Talò & Mannarini 2015). Thus, citizenship and the decision making standards in a democracy evolve through societal characteristics such as mutual trust, fairness and the willingness to compromise, trust in institutions, civil organizations and social movements, and so on, or else, 'civic culture'(Dahl 1984, Schmitter & Karl 1991, Bollen 1990, Newton 1997, Norris 2001, Fukuyama2001, Yamagishi 2001).

Given the democratic legitimization power of political participation, the developed countriesview the increasingly declining turnout rates in their national (and supranational) electorates as an unexpected 'paradox' (Powell 1986,Flickinger&Studlar 1992). Cross country evidence have come to analyze the phenomenon and suggest that electoral participation is affected by the quality of institutions underlying a democratic regime, e.g. the role of mass media freedom and political representation, socio-demographic characteristics and political preferences, economic conditions and the political system (Matsusaka

1995, Feddersen & Pesendorfer 1996, Sobbrío & Navarra 2010, Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2012, Birch 2018). Summarizing the common ground in the field, a number of studies suggest that voting turnout is influenced by a great number of factors which might be distinguished into three wide sets namely, the socio-economic environment, institutions, and party systems (Powell 1986, Blais & Dobrzynska 1998, Franklin 2001, Grönlund & Setälä 2007). While acknowledging these three sets of factors as crucial in determining turnout, their variation across national and supranational contexts suggests that we are still far from a thorough understanding of why people vote. At the theoretical level, macro approaches lack a plausible theory of human motivation that might be used to provide comprehensive explanations of electoral participation thus leading to a general aggregate level theory (Lane & Ersson 1990). Indeed, differences in institutional arrangements and cultural factors account for cross-national variation in voter turnout rates (Jackman & Miller 1995). Through a meta-analysis that assesses the empirical evidence of 83 aggregate-level studies Geys (2006) argues that we indeed lack a ‘core’ model of voter turnout. On the other hand, micro level studies increasingly point to the need to further analyze the role of differences in political preferences, institutions and the socio-economic environment in order to acquire more comprehensive knowledge of such phenomena as voting turnout. Indicative are the findings of Sobbrío and Navarra (2010) who stress that political preferences and education seem to play a significant role in the likelihood of ‘communicating voting’ and this expression is different between left-wing and right – wing voters (Sobbrío & Navarra 2010). Similarly, in their individual level study Grönlund and Setälä (2007), analyze institutional trust, and in particular trust in parliament, as a key determinant that increases the likelihood of voting.

In the present study we analyze voting turnout in Greece using individual level data that will allow us to determine the role of socio-demographic and economic conditions as well as the role of individual level preferences over institutions and the political system of the country. Available knowledge includes very few studies regarding the determinants of voting in Greece. At the macro level of analysis, indicative is the study of Alogoskoufis and Philippopoulos (1991) who extend the ‘rational partisan model’ to introduce the role of inflation and unemployment dynamics as voter determinants. More recently, the study of Nezi (2012) uses individual level data to test for the ‘grievance asymmetry’ hypothesis in relation to



support for the incumbent party. Other studies deal with the role of mass media in voting and voting intentions in Greece (Papagiannidis, Coursaris&Bourlakis 2012) and the role of subjective individual perceptions in economic voting (Freire & Costa Lobo 2005).

Here, we follow Dahl (1984) and Talo and Mannarini (2015) and we try to differentiate between *expressive participation* (acts motivated by sense of identity and obligation to neighbors, community etc.) and *instrumental participation* (acts motivated by the functional and political concerns of people such as protect personal investments and promote local businesses etc.) as determinants of voting turnout in the case of Greece. To do so we set a twofold aim that consists of: 1) scetching the socio-demographic and economic profile of voters (compared to non-voters) and, 2) identifying the possible effect that formal and latent political participation, activism and trust might excersise upon an individual's decision to participate in elections in Greece. Taken together these two sets of voting determinants will allow us to draw more informative conclusions regarding the individulas that are more likely to participate in such a crucial democratic legitimisation process such as parliamentary elections.

Voting turnout in Greece is compulsory. This is a quite important characteristic of the Greek democracy since in terms of political democracy mandatory electoral participation is a fair insitution, an equitable and effective coordination device to support for the provision of democracy as a public good (Birch 2018). Thus, both political and socio-economic equality are to be expected as the outcomes of a democracy (Birch 2018). With constantly decreasing voting turnout rates in Greece concern has grown over the key aspects of our democracy such as legitimization and representation. Assessing the quality of democracy in post-1974 Greece<sup>1</sup>, Danopoulos (2017) concludes that the country's quality of democracy is fair, but is in need of improvement, while Daskalopoulou (2018a) reports low individual level rates of satisfaction with democracy in Greece that depend largely upon the perceived quality of civil institutions in the country. As Figure 1 shows voting abstention in parliamentary elections in Greece has more than doubled in the last four decades, from 20,46% in 1974 to 43,43% in 2015. Within this context we analyse the individual level motivation and mobilisation determinants of voting turnout in Greece by means of testing the following hypotheses:

H1. The socio-demographic and economic characteristics of respondents affect their voting turnout decision.

H2. Formal political participation will exercise a statistically significant and positive (negative) effect on the probability of voting.

H3. Latent political participation will exercise a statistically significant and positive (negative) effect upon the probability of voting if it operates as complementary (substitute) to formal political participation.

H4. Activism will exercise a statistically significant and positive (negative) effect upon the probability of voting if it operates as complementary (substitute) to formal political participation.

H5. Trust will exercise a statistically significant and positive (negative) effect upon the probability of voting.

The presence and the sign of the above described effects is expected to provide us with important insights as regards the individuals' expectations, perceptions, and the overall motivation and mobilization factors that underlie their decision to vote. H1 is considered the benchmark model that controls for the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of individuals which together with H2-H5 will provide us with important information about the profile of voters and the importance of economic or expressive considerations in this decision.

## **Empirical Model and Data**

### ***The Model***

As explained in the previous part, the aim is to identify those factors that will enhance the probability that an individual participates in elections. Thus, a person's decision to vote may be modeled as a binary (dichotomous) dependent variable of the form:

$$y = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if person } i \text{ voted} \\ 0, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

where,  $y$  is the dependent variable denoting voters and non-voters amongst those that are eligible to vote. In principle, any continuous probability distribution defined over the real line will suffice as to obtain consistent predictions of the probability of the outcomes expressed in equation (1) (Greene 1997). Either a normal distribution (probit model) or a logistic distribution (logit model) can be used to model the above outcomes. The two distributions are expected to give similar predictions unless the sample contains very few responses/non-responses (i.e. very few values of  $Y$  equal to 1 or  $Y$  equal to 0) and/or there is wide variation in an important independent variable (Greene 1997, Amemiya 1981). In our case there is a very large difference in the percentage of voters compared to that of non-voters (see Table 1 in section 3.2) so we have chosen to use a logistic distribution. In that case we get a logit model of the form:

$$\text{Prob}(y=1) = \frac{e^{\beta'x}}{1 + e^{\beta'x}} = \Lambda(\beta'x) \quad (2)$$

where  $\Lambda(\cdot)$  indicates the logistic cumulative distribution function,  $x$  is a vector of explanatory variables, and  $\beta$  is a set of corresponding parameters that reflect the impact of changes in  $x$  on the probability of  $y^*$ . The goodness of fit measures usually reported are the percent correctly predicted and various pseudo- $R$  squared measures, the most often cited being the likelihood-ratio test statistic suggested by McFadden (1974). Here, we report the log likelihood value (-2LL) which tests for the significance of the explanatory variables model (full model) compared to the null model, two pseudo- $R^2$  values<sup>2</sup> that tell us approximately how much variation in the outcome is explained by the model and, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test of the goodness of fit, which is a Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test of whether or not the model is an adequate fit to the data<sup>3</sup>. However, it should be noted that goodness-of-fit measures in the case of binary response models is not as important as statistical and economic significance of the explanatory variables (Wooldridge 2002, Estrella 1998). A final note refers to the interpretation of the logit model coefficients. The estimated  $\beta$ 's indicate the amount of increase (or decrease, if the sign of the coefficient is negative) in the predicted log odds of  $Y = 1$  that would be predicted by a 1 unit increase (or decrease) in the predictor, holding all other predictors constant. Thus, in the case of the logit model the slope coefficient  $\beta$  is interpreted as the rate of change in the "log odds" of the dependent variable ( $Y$ ) as an independent variable ( $X$ ) changes. Because this

explanation is not very intuitive it is accustomed to compute the more intuitive  $\exp(B)$  which is the effect of the independent variable on the odds ratio<sup>4</sup>. Odds ratios equal to 1 mean that there is a 50/50 chance that the event will occur with a small change in the independent variable. When the odds ratio is greater than 1, it describes a positive relationship and an odds ratio less than 1 implies a negative relationship.

### ***Data and Variables***

The sample consists of a total number of 9,740 observations obtained from the four ESV waves that are available for Greece (ESV Waves 1-2002, 2-2006, 4-2008 and 5-2011). A usable sample of 9,135 observations consisting of the respondents that are eligible to vote, has been selected. Voters represent 81.6% of the sample (7,863 obs.) and non-voters represent 13.9% of the sample (1,272 obs.) (Table 1).

Our dependent variable is a binary one taking the value of 1 if the respondent has voted in the last national elections and 0 if he/she hasn't. The independent variables have been divided into five sets of factors referring to: 1<sup>st</sup>) the socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents (lnAge, lnEducation, Gender, Children, Lives with husband/wife/partner at household grid, Household Income, Income satisfaction), 2<sup>nd</sup>) their pattern of formal political participation (Worked in political party or action group last 12 months, Member of political party, Contacted politician or government official last 12 months), 3<sup>rd</sup>) their pattern of latent political participation (Feel closer to a particular party than all other parties, How interested in politics, TV watching, news/politics/current affairs on average weekday), 4<sup>th</sup>) their pattern of activism (Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker last 12 months, Signed petition last 12 months, Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months, Boycotted certain products last 12 months, Worked in another organisation or association last 12 months), 5<sup>th</sup>) the individuals' level of generalized and institutional trust (Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful, Trust in country's parliament, Trust in the legal system, Trust in the police, Trust in the European Parliament, Trust in the United Nations). Finally, wave dummies have been used to test for the presence of time structural breaks in our model. Table 2 presents the definition and measurement of variables as well as basic descriptive statistics for the whole sample and the voters and the non-voters sub-samples.

## Results

Table 3 summarizes the results from the empirical estimation of equation 1. As the summary statistics show model 1 referring to the whole period under study presents a very satisfactory fit to the data and can thus be used as reference point in the analysis of the predictors of voting turnout in Greece. However, since there is a structural break in the model, evidenced by the statistically significant sign of the 2011 wave dummy, we have split the sample into the pre and post crisis periods and run models 2 and 3. Before we proceed to the presentation of these results we need to first point that the break in our model is positive suggesting that the probability of voting increased in that period. Comparing the results of models 2 and 3 we see that the socio-economic and demographic profile of voters in the two periods is different (H1 is confirmed). This difference relates to the effect of gender, education and income between the pre and post crisis periods. In particular, in the pre crisis period the probability of voting turnout decreases with age, marriage, children and income. In contrast, in the post crisis period the probability of voting turnout increases with gender (male) and income and decreases with age, education, marriage and income satisfaction. The difference in the profile of voters in the two periods bears some important evidence. In the pre crisis period we might discern a trend of abstention characterising the household type of voters (older, married people with children in the family). In the post crisis period we see that voting turnout is more likely to occur for male respondents of higher income while the probability decreases again for older, well educated and married respondents that are satisfied with their household income level.

As regards the effect of political participation on the probability of voting results show that it matters in both periods but its effect is negative (H2 is confirmed). More specifically, formal political participation in the form of political contacts decreases the probability of voting and this is observed in both the pre and the post crisis period. The same negative effects are observed in the case of latent political participation which has been found to also negatively affect the probability of voting turnout in both periods (H3 is confirmed). As shown, the probability of voting decreases for those respondents who feel closer to a particular party and show higher

levels of interest in politics. Results regarding the effect of activism in voting turnout suggest that it matters and its effect is differentiated between the two periods (H4 is confirmed). In the pre crisis period the probability of voting increases for respondents which have boycotted certain products and decreases for the respondents who have participated in petitions. In the post crisis period only demonstrations matter and in fact in a negative way that is the probability of voting decreases for those who have participated in lawful public demonstrations. Finally, as regards the effect of trust on the probability of voting turnout we see that generalised trust does not affect the decision to vote while institutional trust is a voting predictor (H5 is confirmed). What is even more important however is the fact that institutional trust in the pre crisis period is important positive voting predictor for those who trust the legal system and supranational institutions such as the UN, while it is a negative voting predictor for those who trust the police and the EU. Finally, the last also important finding is that in the post crisis period only trust in the legal system matters, i.e. it is a positive voting predictor.

Table 4 summarizes the estimated  $B$ 's which can be used to discern the most powerful voting predictors in terms of the impact of the statistically significant variables of the models on the probability of voting turnout in the pre and post crisis periods. Values larger than 1 indicate a positive effect and variables lower than 1 indicate a negative effect. So, in the pre crisis period almost all variables are found to be negative predictors of the probability of voting and the only positive impacts come from boycottage actions (which have the largest positive effect), trust in the legal system and trust in the UN. In the post crisis period a different picture is observed. Now the probability of voting increases for male respondents, with higher incomes and higher levels of trust in the legal system which is the only positive predictor which is found important in both periods of the analysis. This difference in the profile of voters in the two periods suggests a change in the underlying motivation processes, a quite important issue that is discussed in more detail in the last section of the study.

A final note that should be made at this point refers to the robustness of the current findings. In particular we have tested for the possible sensitiveness of our results in the presence of other important variables related to the respondents's: a) employment status and type of employment; b) political beliefs (position on the left to right scale, trust in politicians, trust in political parties); c) use of other sources of

information about politics (newspaper reading, politics/current affairs on average weekday, and/or radio listening, news/politics/current affairs on average weekday); and d) abstract forms of engagement (feelings about politics, e.g. politics too complicated to understand, difficulty in making mind up about political issues) (Ceron&Memoli 2016,Daskalopoulou 2018b,Talò&Mannarini 2015, Ekman & Amnå 2012). Our results are robust as none of these variables have been found to exert a statistically significant effect on the probability of voting turnout. This in turn is crucial as to the conclusions of the current study with regard to our main research question, i.e. the expressive or instrumental character of voting turnout in Greece. This discussion is presented in the last section of the study along with a discussion about the policy relevance of the current findings as well as a discussion about the limitations of the study and issues for further research.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

The present study aims at identifying the determinants of voting turnout in Greece using European Social Values Survey data for the 2002-2011 period and a binary dependent variable model. Five empirical hypotheses are formed and tested in the context of the study and in particular we test for: a) the socio-demographic and economic characteristics that affect the respondents' voting turnout decision; b) the effect of formal political participation processes on the probability of voting; c) the effect of latent political participation processes on the probability of voting; d) the effect of activism on the probability of voting; and e) the effect of trust (generalised and insituational) on the probability a person decides to vote. The analysis controls for the structural break observed in the model after the onset of the economic crisis in the country and particularly after the enforcement of the first financial consolidation measures. The analysis provides support to the sketch of two different profiles that are compatible with a backward turn, or perhaps a delay, in the democratic modernization process of Greece. More specifically, in the pre crisis period we see that the voters are people who value contemporary forms of civil engagement (boycottage), and trust in formal national and supranational insuttuions. Along with the negative signs of all other statistically significant variables and especially the socio-demographic variables and the political paticipation variables we might argue that there seems to be a trend

of political distrust (or a more apolitical stance) for older, married respondents who consider other forms of civil engagement, e.g. petitions, as a substitute to standard civil participation processes, (the latter enhanced by the positive role of factors that also suggest a movement away from traditional forms of civic engagement, e.g. boycottage), while they appreciate the legal system and supranational institutions like the UN. In the post crisis period the profile of voters is different. Now some of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of individuals are important as we see that gender and income are strong positive predictors of voting in that period. Of the other variables only trust in the legal system matters positively. Thus, we might argue that there is differentiated stance after the onset of the financial consolidation measures which has caused higher income male respondents to increase their voting rates while again appreciating formal institutions. Taken together the evidence for the two periods support the argument that citizens vote in accordance with instrumental voting. People decide on the basis of income, and socio-economic equality and safety considerations as embedded in trust in the legal system. A final issue that should be noted here refers to the robustness of our results in the presence of other variables that could be of potential importance in the voting decision.

The above mentioned results bear important implications in terms of policy analysis in the field and in particular in terms of building strong institutions that might provide the societal consensus that is detrimental for the success of measures that are taken in order to effectively deal with the crisis. Modern democracies as defined by Newton (1997) are the third evolution step of a democratic regime<sup>5</sup>, a step in which abstract types of trust will prevail and thus a challenge will be at hand to identify the cognitive mobilization mechanisms that will be at work in this phase of a society's overall development process. Fukuyama (2001, 2014) makes similar observations about the abstract types of engagement in modern democracies and highlights just how important is for a state to avoid actions that will destroy a society's stock of social capital. In particular, he suggests that a society's stock of trust can be destroyed by a state that is inefficient in the provision of necessary public goods, and particularly property rights and public safety, and in controlling the state's involvement in market activities (Fukuyama 2001).

In terms of its political regime, Greece might be considered a stable and mature constitutional democracy organized as a Parliamentary Republic that sustains



fair political rights and liberties to her citizens (Danopoulos 2017). Nevertheless, increasing abstention rates point to a legitimization crisis that most probably relates to the wider civic culture qualities of the Greek society (Bitros 2013, Daskalopoulou 2018a). In particular, rent seeking activities, government inefficiency and partisan politics have built change resistant barriers (Bitros 2013). To that extent it is important to verify that in the case of Greece, the voting decision seems to have a strong instrumental character. Income matters and citizens seem to move away from political institutions but they turn to the legal system (the equality and safety provider) and/or to alternative forms of engagement such as public demonstrations. To that extent the future might bring about a combination of reactions / trends towards voting which will reflect either an increase in commitment to vote as the ultimate instrument of participation, and / or a trend towards a more apolitical (pathetic) stance, and / or a trend towards alternative forms of civic engagement (non-standard, abstract forms of engagement). The current findings suggest that such mechanisms are present in the Greek society and they merit attention and future research.

The present findings are important also in terms of policy analysis in the field. The importance of economic considerations for voting participation clearly indicate that citizens' support to state regime is interlinked with growth and prosperity prerequisites. This in turn, adds complexity to an existing backward spiral that commenced with the onset of the financial crisis, and the measures employed to address it, and continuous to exacerbate in the presence of other socio-economic challenges and phenomena such as unemployment and exploitation in the workplace, migration, rising crime and insecurity etc. (Pantazidou 2013, Voulgarelli-Christidou 2016). Furthermore, the economic and democratic depression currently experienced in Greece (Bellucci, Lobo & Lewis-Beck 2012) coincides with the citizens' deeper knowledge and understanding of how country level decisions are transferred to European Union and taken therein in favor of an enlarged but not necessarily integrated EU community (Baltas 2013, Bitros 2015). To the extent that Greece has still important work to do in terms of implementing the measures agreed under its bailout package and forwarding the deepening of structural reforms, widespread societal consensus is required as these measures will be coming in a 'tired' socioeconomic context that is difficult to provide consent to inefficient, unfair and unproductive measures such as the ones implemented in the last years.



## Endnotes:

1. In 1974, democracy has been restored in Greece after the collapse of the dictatorship that ruled the country from 1967.
2. The versions are the Cox and Snell and the Nagelkerke tests which are again used as approximations since they vary significantly depending on sample size and specification (Cox & Snell 1989, Nagelkerke 1991).
3. The null hypothesis is that the model is a ‘good enough’ fit to the data ( $p \geq .05$ ) and we will only reject this null hypothesis, i.e. the model is a ‘poor’ fit, if  $p < .05$ . The test is subject to sample size and the inclusion of interactions in the data so again it should be considered as an approximation (Hosmer & Lemeshow 2013).
4. The odds ratio is the probability of the event divided by the probability of the nonevent. For example, if  $\exp B_1 = 2$ , then a one unit change in the independent variable  $X_1$  would make the event twice as likely (.67/.33) to occur. For more details see: UCLA, SCG. Available at: <https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/sas/modules/sas-learning-moduleintroduction-to-the-features-of-sas/>.
5. Newton (1997) describes a ‘continuum of democracy’ that evolves alongside a mature process of the interrelationship between political democracy and types of trust in a society. As he argues, the first step is primary democracies, which depend on thick trust, i.e. direct political participation prevails, and the second step is Tocquevillean civil virtue democracies, which depend on thin trust, i.e. weak ties and links prevail (Newton 1997).

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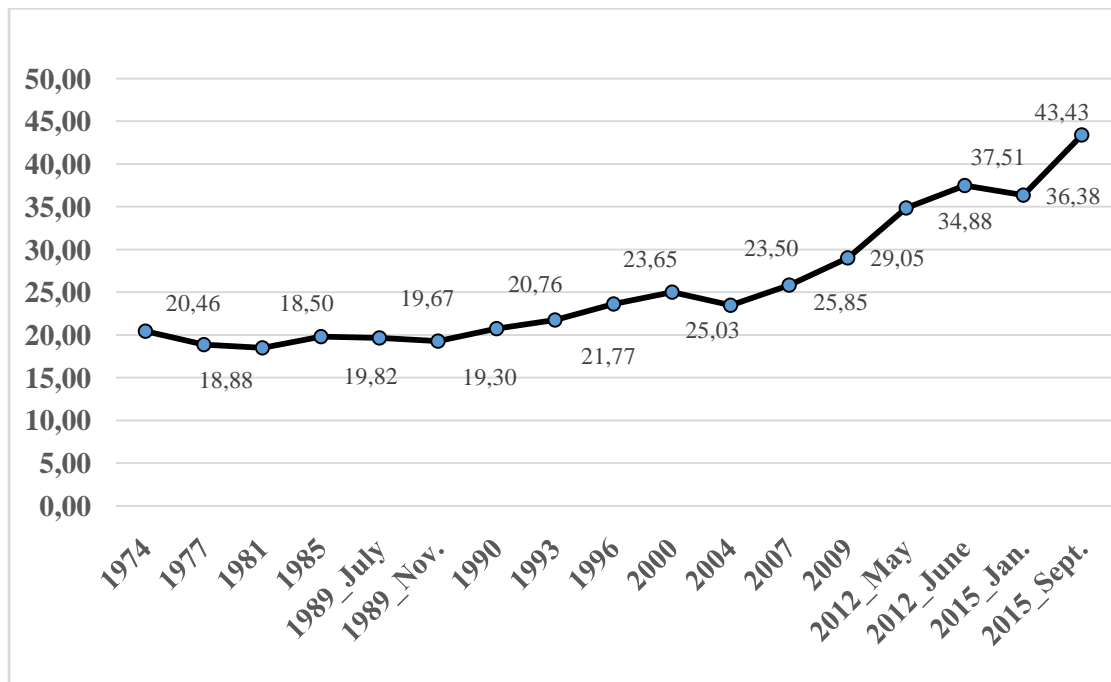
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**Figure 1.** Voting abstention in parliamentary elections in Greece since 1974.



Source: Own calculations based on Parliamentary elections data available at: <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/>

**Table 1.**Distribution of voters and non-voters in the sample.

	Wave				Total
	Wave 1	2	Wave 4	Wave 5	
Voters	2,139	2,050	1,692	1,982	7,863
Non-voters	248	229	252	543	1,272
Not eligible to vote	167	126	125	187	605
Total	2,554	2,405	2,069	2,712	9,740
Total usable sample	2,387	2,279	1,944	2,525	9,135

— Source: Own calculations using ESV data for Greece.

**Table 2.** Definition, measurement and basic descriptive statistics for the whole sample and the voters and the non-voters sub-samples.

Variable definition and measurement	Basic descriptive statistics					
	All		Voters		Non-Voters	
	Mean	Stdev	Mean	Stdev	Mean	Stdev
<b>Socio-demographic and economic</b>						
lnAge, Age of respondent, calculated (13-98)	48.20	18.63	50.57	17.48	43.17	20.70
lnEducation, Years of full-time education completed (0-28)	10.56	4.49	10.44	4.63	11.06	4.21
Gender (0-1, 1=male)	.44	.50	.44	.50	.42	.49
Children (0-1, 1=Yes)	.41	.49	.43	.50	.30	.46
Lives with husband/wife/partner at household grid (0-1, 1=Yes)	.60	.49	.65	.48	.42	.49
Household Income, in twelve income categories (1-12)	4.82	2.21	4.89	2.21	4.50	2.21
Income satisfaction, feeling about household income (0-3)	1.35	.89	1.37	.89	1.26	.88
<b>Formal political participation</b>						
Worked in political party or action group last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.04	.21	.05	.22	.02	.12
Member of political party (0-1, 1=Yes)	.06	.24	.07	.25	.01	.12
Contacted politician or government official last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.12	.32	.13	.34	.04	.20
<b>Latent political participation</b>						
Feel closer to a particular party than all other parties (0-1, 1=Yes)	.51	.41	.58	.49	.23	.42
How interested in politics (0-3) 0 = not at all interested	1.05	.95	1.12	.95	.78	.90
TV watching, news/politics/current affairs on average weekday (0-7)	1.81	1.47	1.90	1.47	1.47	1.43
<b>Activism</b>						

Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.03	.17	.03	.17	.02	.13
Signed petition last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.04	.21	.05	.21	.03	.17
Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.06	.25	.07	.25	.05	.23
Boycotted certain products last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.10	.30	.10	.31	.10	.31
Worked in another organisation or association last 12 months (0-1, 1=Yes)	.05	.22	.05	.23	.02	.15
<b>Generalized and institutional trust</b>						
Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful (0-10)	3.87	2.40	3.81	2.40	4.05	2.39
Trust in country's parliament (0-10)	3.74	2.74	3.82	2.74	3.01	2.64
Trust in the legal system (0-10)	5.07	2.90	5.10	2.88	4.55	2.92
Trust in the police (0-10)	5.51	2.87	5.61	2.84	4.84	2.97
Trust in the European Parliament (0-10)	4.43	2.82	4.48	2.80	3.71	2.78
Trust in the United Nations (0-10)	3.74	2.79	3.72	2.76	3.36	2.70

Source: Own calculations using ESV data for Greece.

**Table 3.** Logistic regression results of the determinants of voting turnout.

	<b>Model 1.</b>	<b>Model 2.</b>	<b>Model 3.</b>
	<b>2002-2011</b>	<b>2002-2008</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>b</i> (s.e.)</b>	<b><i>b</i> (s.e.)</b>	<b><i>b</i> (s.e.)</b>
<i>Intercept</i>	2.749*** (.651)	3.422*** (.886)	2.634*** (1.009)
<b>Socio-economic and demographic</b>			
lnAge	-.800*** (.133)	-.944*** (.178)	-.614*** (.208)
lnEducation	-.235** (.114)	-.145 (.153)	-.361** (.179)
Gender	.074 (.092)	-.100 (.122)	.299** (.143)
Children	-.313*** (.108)	-.443*** (.149)	-.180 (.163)
Lives with husband/wife/partner at household grid	-.527*** (.103)	-.523*** (.139)	-.541*** (.158)
Household Income	-.004 (.023)	-.082** (.033)	.075** (.035)
Income satisfaction	-.096* (.059)	.021 (.079)	-.225*** (.090)
<b>Formal political participation</b>			
Worked in political party or action group last 12 months	-.060 (.398)	.196 (.434)	-.881 (1.087)
Member of political party	-.546 (.362)	-.407 (.419)	-1.061 (.758)
Contacted politician or government official last 12 months	-.510*** (.203)	-.548** (.261)	-.659** (.335)
<b>Latent political participation</b>			
Feel closer to a particular party than all other parties	-1.191*** (.108)	-1.119*** (.132)	-1.417*** (.204)
How interested in politics	-.204*** (.058)	-.186** (.079)	-.239*** (.090)

TV watching. news/politics/current affairs on average weekday	-.029 (.036)	-.053 (.050)	-.019 (.055)
<b>Activism</b>			
Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker last 12 months	-.258 (.474)	.130 (.526)	-1.098 (1.084)
Signed petition last 12 months	-.355 (.316)	-1.024** (.461)	.513 (.464)
Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months	-.315 (.215)	.279 (.304)	-.626** (.306)
Boycotted certain products last 12 months	.360** (.155)	.429** (.196)	.330 (.267)
Worked in another organisation or association last 12 months	-.236 (.314)	-.182 (.381)	-.578 (.584)
<b>Generalized and institutional trust</b>			
Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful	-.004 (.020)	.008 (.026)	-.029 (.033)
Trust in country's parliament	-.008 (.025)	.003 (.032)	-.020 (.044)
Trust in the legal system	.065*** (.025)	.062* (.034)	.066* (.036)
Trust in the police	-.058*** (.022)	-.077** (.031)	-.039 (.032)
Trust in the European Parliament	-.055* (.030)	-.074** (.038)	-.019 (.053)
Trust in the United Nations	.066*** (.027)	.087*** (.032)	.041 (.051)
<b>Time</b>			
wave 1 2002		.003 (.154)	
wave 2 2006		-.049 (.157)	
wave 5 2011	.546*** (.110)		



Summary statistics				
<i>N</i>		5,236	3,691	1,545
<i>-2LL</i>		3,451.072	2,050.619	1,353.761
<i>Cox &amp; Snell R<sup>2</sup></i>		.104	.088	.117
<i>Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></i>		.195	.185	.185
<i>Hosmer &amp; Lemeshow <math>\chi^2</math>Test</i>		5.478	7.671	17.769
		<i>p</i> =.705	<i>p</i> =.466	<i>p</i> =.023
<i>Correctly predicted</i>		87.0	90.1	80.8

Source: Own calculations based on non-missing observations. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Asterisks \*\*\*, \*\*, \* indicate significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% level, respectively.

**Table 4.** Odds ratios of the probability of voting turnout.

	<b>Model 1.</b>	<b>Model 2.</b>	<b>Model 3.</b>
	<b>2002-2011</b>	<b>2002-2008</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b><i>Exp(b)</i></b>	<b><i>Exp(b)</i></b>	<b><i>Exp(b)</i></b>
<i>Intercept</i>	15.622	30.645	13.927
<b>Socio-economic and demographic</b>			
lnAge	.449	.389	.541
lnEducation	.791		.697
Gender			1.349
Children	.731	.642	
Lives with husband/wife/partner at household grid	.591	.593	.582
Income		.921	1.078
Income satisfaction	.908		.799
<b>Formal political participation</b>			
Contacted politician or government official last 12 months	.600	.578	.518
<b>Latent political participation</b>			
Feel closer to a particular party than all other parties	.304	.327	.242
How interested in politics	.816	.830	.787
<b>Activism</b>			
Signed petition last 12 months		.359	
Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months			.535
Boycotted certain products last 12 months	1.433	1.535	
<b>Generalized and Institutional Trust</b>			
Trust in the legal system	1.067	1.064	1.068
Trust in the police	.944	.926	
Trust in the European Parliament	.947	.929	
Trust in the United Nations	1.068	1.091	
<b>Time</b>			
wave 5 2011	1.726		

Source: Own calculations based on non-missing observations. Betas are reported only for the statistically significant variables of the models.